

Testimony
on the
District of Columbia Office on Aging
Fiscal Year 2006 Budget Request
Before the
District of Columbia Council
Committee on Human Services
Adrian Fenty, Chairperson
and

Members:

Marion Barry (Ward 8)
Carol Schwartz (At Large)
Kathleen Patterson (Ward 3)
Vincent Gray (Ward 7)

Presented by

E. Veronica Pace, Executive Director

In the Council Chambers

Monday, April 4, 2005

11:00am

Good morning Chairperson Adrian Fenty and members of the Committee on Human Services, my name is E. Veronica Pace and I am the Executive Director of the D.C. Office on Aging.

With me at the table today are Mr. Sam Gawad, Compliance and Administration Manager and Mr. James Booze, Chairperson of the D.C. Commission on Aging. I want to thank all assembled here today for your support of older Washingtonians and the mission of the Office on Aging.

I am pleased to testify before you on behalf of Mayor Anthony A. Williams' Fiscal Year 2006 Budget Request for the Office on Aging. This is another year that the Mayor has not cut the Office on Aging operating budget. This budget proposes \$21,415,491.00 in total funding and supports 26 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff and represents a 1.3% funding increase from the FY '05 approved budget and no change in FTEs.

- In local funds, this budget proposes \$14,744,041.00 in funding which is an increase of \$12,088 less than 1% over

the Fiscal Year 2005 approved budget of \$14,731,953.00

There are 14 FTEs, the same as FY 2005.

- In federal funds, this budget proposes \$6,446,450.00 an increase of \$295,144 or 4.8 percent over the approved budget of \$6,151,306. There are 9 FTEs, the same as FY 2005.
- In Intra-District funds, this budget proposes \$225,000, a decrease of \$25,000 or 10% from the FY 2005 approved budget. There are 3 FTEs, the same as FY 2005.

The staff of 26 FTEs has remained constant since FY 2000. We are lean; the Office on Aging's administrative costs remain at less than 10 percent (8.3%) of its total budget.

As you know, the Office on Aging was established as a single government agency in 1975 by D.C. Law 1-24. Since then, the Office on Aging has continued to strengthen its framework of support and service to District seniors. Its transition into Performance Based Budgeting in FY 2004 further aligns the agency with the Citywide

Strategic Priority of Lifting All Communities with programs and services targeted to our elders most in need.

The Office on Aging funds 34 different types of services for the dependent, semi-dependent, and independent elderly through grants and contracts to community based non-profit agencies and for profit providers. There are approximately 92,000 seniors in the District of Columbia, which represents about 16 percent of the total D.C. population. This office provided one or more service contacts to 55,965 District seniors in FY 2004.

- The D.C. Office on Aging advocates on behalf of seniors and oversees a comprehensive and coordinated network of senior health and social services. It organizes community forums, outreach activities, and focus groups to inform senior citizens about the quality of services and programs, and the need to expand or modify current programs. In FY 2005, the Office on Aging will continue to promote healthy independent senior lifestyles and sensitize the public to the aging process. In addition, the agency will continue to produce special events, brochures, a monthly newsletter in the Senior Beacon called Spotlight on Aging, and today we are launching a “You Can!”

Campaign at our wellness centers and 2 senior centers to get older people eating better and moving more. We know that eating better and moving more increases the quality of life and extends life expectancy for older people.

The Office on Aging also works closely with the providers in the Senior Service Network. The Network includes a 262-bed nursing home, two group homes, a community residential facility, six lead agencies covering all eight wards of the District, 13 multi-purpose senior centers, 3 senior wellness centers, 54 nutrition centers including a weekend nutrition program, assessment and case management sites, geriatric day care programs, literacy sites, the long-term care ombudsman program, a program for homemaker services, home-delivered meals, a shelter for the abused and exploited seniors, a senior center for the homeless elderly, a senior center for Hispanic seniors, a senior center for Asian seniors, a senior center for the visually handicapped and a senior center for the hearing impaired, and a transportation system. Among our many partnerships/collaboratives are: the Alzheimer's Association, AARP, the University of the District of Columbia's Institute of Gerontology, George Washington, Georgetown and Howard Universities, and the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation.

The Office on Aging administers the provisions of the Federal Older Americans Act as amended, (P.L. 100-175), monitors and assesses the service delivery system operated by the community-based non-profits on a regular basis under performance based grants and coordinates activities with the D.C. Commission on Aging and other organizations to ensure that resources are used effectively.

The agency plans to fulfill its mission by achieving the following strategic result goals:

- Improve the quality of programs as measured by the percentage of providers meeting standardized performance outcomes.
- Improve access to consumer information and assistance for District seniors in the areas of employment, education, health and social services within the Office on Aging as measured by customer surveys, job placements, number of people served or percent of population served, and number of wellness centers.
- Enhance elder caregiver and strengthen family support options as measured by the number of caregivers participating in the Caregiver Institute.

- Introduce seniors and the general public to aging issues through special events and public service announcements.

Programs

The D.C. Office on Aging Budget for FY '06 funds and supports the following four programs:

In-Home and Continuing Care Program:

The In-home and Continuing Care Program provides in-home and day care services and caregiver support to District residents aged 60 and over and their caregivers so that seniors can remain in their homes and caregivers can continue to provide care. The two activities within this program include:

- In-Home and Continuing Care Services – which provides day care, homemaker services, nutritious home-delivered meals, heavy housecleaning, and case management services to frail District residents 60 years and older so they can remain in their homes, and

- Caregiver Support – which provides caregiver education, respite, stipends and transportation services to eligible caregivers so they can continue to provide care.

Community Based Support Program:

The Community Based Support Program provides residential facilities, elder rights assistance, health promotion, wellness, and community services to District residents aged 60 and older so they can live independently in the community, minimizes institutionalization, and administers and monitors the provision of those services. Activities within this program include:

- Health Promotion and Wellness – which provides physical fitness, health screenings, and wellness information services to District residents 60 and over so they can increase their awareness of and adopt healthy behaviors.
- Elder Rights Assistance – which provides legal representation, advocacy, and assistance services to eligible District residents 60 and older or their legal

representatives so they can have legal issues addressed in a timely manner.

- Community Service – which provides nutrition, transportation, socialization, and counseling support services to District residents 60 or older so they can maintain an active and independent lifestyle.
- Supportive Residential Facilities – which provides housing, advocacy, and supportive services to District residents 60 and older who cannot live independently and/or have limited housing options so they can be safe and receive care that meets their needs.

These activities provide a framework to maintain the health of older people, eliminate isolation, support self-care and functional independence, and protect the rights of older persons. Examples of such services are senior centers, nutrition sites, counseling, nutrition education, socialization, literacy, emergency shelter for abused and exploited seniors, and elder rights assistance.

Consumer Information, Assistance and Outreach Program:

The Consumer Information, Assistance and Outreach Program provides aging information and assistance, advocacy, special events, training and education and employment services to District residents and caregivers so they can be informed about aging issues and maintain independence. This program links seniors to services and helps them to recognize the worth and contributions of the elderly to their community and promote healthy life styles through sponsorship of special events.

Activities include:

- Employment Services – which provides employment assistance services to District residents who are at least 55 years of age who are seeking employment so they can gain and maintain employment.
- Information and Assistance – which provides aging-related information, counseling, and referral services for persons 60 years or older so they can be connected to services they request.
- Special Events – which provides socialization, information and recognition to DC residents 60 years and over so they can

increase their awareness of services provided, expand their social network, and project a positive image of aging.

- Training and Education – which provides training to seniors, service providers and the general public so they can enhance their knowledge and increase their skills relating to elderly issues.

Agency Management Program:

The Agency Management Program provides the operational support to the agency so they have the necessary tools to achieve operational and programmatic results. This program is standard for all performance-based budgeting within the District agencies.

When I appeared before you on Monday, March 3, 2005, in the chamber to report on the FY 2004 performance and the FY 2005 spending, I detailed specific accomplishments such as the delivery of the 1.3 million nutritious mid-day meals to nearly ten thousand elderly Washingtonians, and the provision of 83,583 one-way trips to medical and other life-supporting appointments and services (2,123 District seniors). With the FY 2006

proposed total budget of \$21,415,491.00, the Office on Aging will continue to provide congregate meals which are communal meals served and consumed in a group setting where two or more socialization activities are provided, home-delivered meals, transportation, advocacy, adult daycare, comprehensive assessment and case management, core counseling, employment, health insurance counseling, heavy housecleaning, independent living skills, information and assistance, legal services, outreach, literacy training, long-term care, nutrition counseling and education, long term care ombudsman services, advocacy services for the blind, the hearing impaired, and the homeless; socialization, special events and health promotion, disease prevention, and wellness programs and services. The numbers of seniors participating in these programs and services is detailed in our FY 2004 Report to the People.

CAPITAL BUDGET:

The Office on Aging Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2006 proposes \$576,000.00 for its Information Technology Project in Continuity of Operations, specifically to design a Mirror Site for the Office on

Aging's Client Service Information System, which is based at the Georgetown Data Center.

- Project name: Continuity of Operations

Description:

The Office on Aging currently operates a data center in conjunction with Georgetown University, a non-District government entity. The system which run on servers are mission critical to the Office on Aging and include financial and executive decision support applications. The system knowledge is not well documented which poses major risks and potential for catastrophic failure, i.e. physical loss of hardware and software and the loss of experience and skills of the project director. A backup (mirror) system that is controlled by the District government is mandatory.

- Status:

The both Phase One and Phase Two will be completed by 9/30/05. The estimated completion date for this project is September 30, 2006.

The total available budget for this project for FY 06 is
\$576,000.00.

Let me conclude my statement by stating that we continue to provide the “best bang for the buck.” We have never overspent our budget and assure you that we expect to end FY 2006 within budget.

This concludes my testimony. I am pleased to answer any questions you have and to provide you with follow-up information as well.